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INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 6879
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TAGS: KREC KTIA KWBG ODIP ASEC EAID PREL IS
SUBJECT: ENGAGING THE GOI ON PROCEDURES AT WEST BANK
CROSSINGS

REF: A. A) SECSTATE 117652
1B. B) JERUSALEM 2069

¶11. (SBU) EconCouns took advantage of a previously scheduled meeting with Ministry of Defense Advisor Oded Herman to raise ref A talking points and to discuss a further incident at the Jalameh crossing on November 13 (Ref B). Herman explained that there are three organizations that handle security at crossings and checkpoints -- the Crossings Administration (crossings into Green Line Israel), the Border Police (Jerusalem crossings), and the Israeli Defense Forces (checkpoints). Policy and procedural guidelines for the non-IDF crossings are jointly developed by Shin Bet and the Israeli National Police (INP). However, Herman stressed that the staff of all three agencies have one requirement in common -- the need periodically stop vehicles and match photo IDs with the faces of the individuals in the vehicles. He said from the information he had received on the recent incidents in Jalameh, this seems to be at the heart of the problem. Asked why diplomatic- or consular-plated vehicles are stopped (EconCouns has twice been asked to produce ID on leaving Jerusalem en route to Tel Aviv over the past 16 months), Herman said that these periodic checks reduce the likelihood that terrorists or criminals would steal or carjack such vehicles in the belief that they would not be stopped at security crossings or checkpoints.

¶12. (SBU) Herman agreed with EconCouns that any other request by GOI security officials with respect to a diplomatic or consular vehicle -- he cited vehicle search, requirement to exit the vehicle, singling out of locally engaged staff for questioning -- would be either illegal or inappropriate. However, he cautioned that his office did not set the procedures for any of the three crossing/checkpoint agencies.

He suggested that if any of the recent incidents in Jalameh "or anywhere else" turned up actions or requests that were "inappropriate," whether by Crossings Administration, IDF or Border Police staff that the Embassy protest formally to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notify his office and raise the incident directly with the appropriate GOI security authority. (Note: Embassy/ConGen RSOs and EconCouns will meet with newly appointed Crossings Administrator Kamil Abu Rukun on November 30 for a detailed review of the incidents to date, a thorough explanation of procedures at all of the CA-run crossings, and, we hope, an agreement on how to avoid such problems in the future. Embassy and ConGen RSOs met with INP officials on November 18 for the same purpose (septel). End Note.)

¶13. (SBU) Herman rejected out of hand the point that disparities in security procedures at Israeli checkpoints or crossings would have any impact on the safety or security of USG personnel, and argued that unpredictability of identity checks actually ensured the safety of everyone living or working in the region, not just Israelis. While Israel had plenty of security threats with which to deal, Herman said, "this is not Iraq, and your security officials should not act

as though it is, particularly when they are on undisputed Israeli soil, such as the Israeli side of the Jalameh crossing." In closing, Herman expressed confidence that the November 30 meeting would result in agreement on measures to allow Israeli crossings officials to match IDs with faces without compromising USG vehicle security requirements.

CUNNINGHAM